

From: Lawrence COHEN [<mailto:cohen@berkeley.edu>]
Sent: Thursday, October 08, 2015 8:22 AM
To: Kenneth McDonald; Tom Adams
Subject: Intention to prepare report for History–Social Science Framework

Dear Members of the History–Social Science Subject Matter Committee, Instructional Quality Commission:

We write as Directors of our respective South Asia Research Centers at Stanford, the University of California, Berkeley, the University of California Davis, and the University of California, Los Angeles.

We were recently notified of the current cycle of hearings and reviews your Committee is doing to produce the next History–Social Science Framework, and have had a brief chance to examine the public comments and proposed emendations. Our concern, one we know is shared and exemplified by your careful process of review, is that scholarly norms are rigorously followed as the committee wrestles with the concerns these comments reflect. We and our colleagues across all of California's universities with South Asia programs are charged not only with teaching college and graduate students but ensuring that the resources of the expert faculty our Research Centers bring together support the broader California public including K-12 and community college education.

We worry that some emendations may reflect an ideological as opposed to historical understanding of the significance of the Indus Valley civilization. We also have concerns about some emendations to the extent these suggest less scholarly questions than challenges to the rights and religious freedom of

low caste
and minority groups in India.

None of these are simple questions, and we ourselves share concerns with how migration, religion, and caste have been treated by earlier standard history. We respect the concerns of the public seeking respect for a diverse and important heritage. We ourselves are part of the diverse California public, of course. But all such concerns must be based on reasoned and scholarly debate, peer review, and rigorous standards of evidence and of analysis.

We unfortunately cannot attend this week's meeting as we learned of the process too late to relinquish our own teaching and administrative responsibilities. We cannot submit a report to you this week as we need time to examine the Draft materials closely and to bring in our colleagues, across the state and as needed internationally, to examine these materials with great care.

We plan to submit a report to you, as short and concise as we can make it, at least a week and we hope two weeks before your next full committee meeting in November.

If it is possible, and useful, for some of our faculty members to attend this next meeting we will try to see who can take off from teaching and administration. But in any event we will work to submit a careful report to you in writing and in advance. We imagine that more California universities, and research centers, will be involved in that report, including of course our four university faculties.

Thank you

Lawrence Cohen

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